

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 11155 01 OF 03 302321Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 OES-07 NSC-05 AGRE-00 FEA-01
AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 ERDA-07 COME-00 DODE-00
EB-08 EPA-04 INR-07 L-03 NSF-02 NSAE-00 PM-05
USIA-15 SS-15 SP-02 INT-05 /117 W
-----120527 302359Z /75

R 301907Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 927
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
USUN NEW YORK 1211

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 NAIROBI 11155/1

FROM USDEL

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, OCON, UN
SUBJ: UN CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION: PRINCIPAL US STATEMENT

FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE DELIVERED BY US CHIEF
OF DELEGATION JAMES A. JOSEPH DURING MORNING SESSION
AUGUST 30.

BEGIN TEXT

MR. PRESIDENT, ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION,
I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND TO YOU, AND TO THE ELECTED VICE
CHAIRPERSONS, OUR SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT MZEE JOMO KENYATTA, AND
THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF KENYA, I WISH TO EXPRESS OUR
WARM AND HEARTFELT APPRECIATION FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.

I WANT ALSO TO RECORD THE UNITED STATES' APPRECIATION
TO DR. TOLBA FOR THE OUTSTANDING SERVICE HE HAS PERFORMED
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PAGE 02 NAIROB 11155 01 OF 03 302321Z

AS SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR THIS CONFERENCE, AND ALSO TO THE
CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT.

I AM ALSO PLEASED TO HAVE BROUGHT TO THIS CONFERENCE THE
GREETING OF PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.
THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, WHICH WAS READ AT THE OPENING OF
THE CONFERENCE, HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE MY COUNTRY ATTACHES

TO THIS CONFERENCE.

THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION HAS COME TO THIS CONFERENCE AS REPRESENTATIVES OF A NATION FULLY AWARE OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND MANAGEMENT. OUR EXPERIENCES -- AND OUR ASPIRATIONS -- BOTH FOR OUR OWN PEOPLE AND THOSE OF OTHER NATIONS -- SO CLEARLY INTERMINGLE WITH THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS GATHERING THAT WE HAVE A DIRECT AND IMMEDIATE STAKE IN ITS SUCCESS. AS UNDER SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MY COUNTRY'S GOVERNMENT CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING THE NATION'S NATURAL RESOURCES, I AM PLEASED THAT WE HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN ABLE TO BRING TO THIS CONFERENCE POLICY-MAKERS, BUT SOME OF OUR BEST EXPERTS IN LAND MANAGEMENT AND RECLAMATION.

I WANT, THEREFORE, TO SAY A WORD ABOUT WHY WE ARE PARTICIPATING IN THIS CONFERENCE.

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE WE SHARE A COMMON PREDICAMENT. DESERT ENCROACHMENT AND THE DETERIORATION OF SEMI-ARID LANDS ARE NOT UNIQUE TO ANY ONE COUNTRY, REGION OR POLITICAL SYSTEM. THE PROCESS CALLED DESERTIFICATION IS A THREAT TO THE SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF US ALL.

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE DESERTIFICATION IS A HUMAN PROBLEM. MY NATION'S CONCERN FOR PEOPLE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR
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PAGE 03 NAIROB 11155 01 OF 03 302321Z

COMMUNITIES HAS BEEN HIGHLIGHTED IN MANY FORUMS. WE NOW WISH IT KNOWN THAT THIS CONCERN ENLARGES THE BOUNDARIES OF THE HUMAN COMMUNITY TO INCLUDE THE LAND COMMUNITY WITH ALL ITS INTERDEPENDENT PARTS; SOIL, WATER, PLANTS AND ANIMALS. SUCH A CONCERN DOES NOT REMOVE HUMAN KIND FROM THE CENTER OF THE COMMUNITY, IT SIMPLY IMPLES RESPECT FOR THE OTHER MEMBERS. WE HAVE COME TO THIS CONFERENCE CONVINCED OF THE NEED FOR A NEW LAND ETHIC, A VALUE SYSTEM WHICH NOT ONLY FOSTERS AN APPRECIATION FOR OUR TIES TO NATURE, BUT WHICH SEEKS TO CORRECT THE ABUSES AND EASES THE PAIN OF MANY YEARS OF ESTRANGEMENT FROM IT.

WE ARE HERE TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCES. THE LESSONS WE HAVE LEARNED FROM PAST MISMANAGEMENT OF OUR ARID AND SEMI-ARID LANDS ARE ALL PART OF THE NATIONAL DEBATE ABOUT EFFECTIVE LAND MANAGEMENT AND WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT.

WE ARE HERE TO LEARN. DESERTIFICATION IS NOT A NEW PHENOMENON. MANY NATIONS WERE STRUGGLING WITH ITS THREAT LONG BEFORE THE BIRTH OF MY OWN NATION. WE WANT TO LEARN FROM OTHERS BOTH WHAT HAS WORKED AND WHAT HAS FAILED.

FINALLY, WE ARE HERE TO HELP SHAPE AN INTERNATIONAL
CONSENSUS. WE HOPE TO COME OUT OF THIS CONFERENCE WITH A
COMMON COMMITMENT TO A REALISTIC, MENINGFUL AND COORDINATED
PLAN OF ACTION TO ATTACK THIS GLOBAL PROBLEM.

U.S. EXPERIENCE

I MENTIONED EARLIER THAT THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT
COME TO THIS CONFERENCE AS A CURIOUS BYSTANDER. WE HAVE
MANY AREAS WHICH HAVE ALREADY REACHED THE ECOLOGICAL DANGER
POINT.

WHILE SOME MAY TEND TO DISMISS THE U.S. EXPERIENCE AS
NOT BEING TYPICAL, I RATHER BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE QUITE IN-
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PAGE 04 NAIROB 11155 01 OF 03 302321Z

STRUCTIVE AND MEANINGFUL TO OTHER NATIONS. FOR IN OUR
RELATIVELY BRIEF 200-YEAR HISTORY, THE UNITED STATES HAS
PASSED THROUGH A BROAD SPECTRUM OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
LEVELS -- INITIALLY, POOR, SPARSELY-SETTLED AND AGRARIAN...
LATER, EXPANSIVE, PIONEERING, RANGELAND-ORIENTED, WITH RAPID
POPULATION INCREASES...AND, TODAY, DEVELOPED, INDUSTRIALIZED,
URBANIZED. AND POSSESSING A RELATIVELY STABLE POPULATION.

IN RECOGNITION OF AN ARRAY OF PROBLEMS AND NEEDS, A
NEW FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT WAS PASSED INTO
LAW IN 1976, REPEALING DOZENS OF OBSOLETE STATUTES, AND
SETTING FORTH A MULTIPLE-USE MANAGEMENT CONCEPT FOR ADMIN-
ISTERING THE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF ACRES OF U.S. PUBLIC
LANDS. THIS CONCEPT INVOLVES THE MANAGEMENT OF ALL THE
RESOURCES OF THE PUBLIC LANDS, AND IN THAT COMBINATION WHICH
WILL BEST SERVE THE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE,
WHILE MAINTAINING A HIGH RATE OF PRODUCTIVITY OF THE LAND
AND PRESERVING THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

IN ATTEMPTING TO COPE WITH DESERTIFICATION THROUGHTOUT
THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRY, THE FOLLOWING LESSONS ARE
AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT WE HAVE LEARNED:

FIRST, DETERIORATION OF OUR LAND AND WATER PERSISTED
AND INCREASED UNTIL THEY WERE BROUGHT UNDER EFFECTIVE
PUBLIC REGULATION.

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 11155 02 OF 03 302330Z
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EB-08 EPA-04 INR-07 L-03 NSF-02 NSAE-00 PM-05
USIA-15 SS-15 SP-02 INT-05 /117 W
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R 301907Z AUG 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 928
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
USUN NEW YORK 1212

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 3 NAIROBI 11155/2

FROM USDEL

SECOND, THE NECESSARY NEW LAWS, REGULATIONS AND
PROGRAMS MUST BE DEVELOPED WITH THE DIRECT PARTICIPATION
OF THE AFFECTED LOCAL PEOPLE.

THIRD, A DEFINITE PHILOSOPHY OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
MUST BE FOLLOWED.

FOURTH, THE MANAGEMENT CONCEPT AND IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS
MUST BE SUPPORTED BY STRONG INSTITUTIONS OF PLANNING,
ASSESSMENT, RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND TRAINING. AND,

LAST, COMBATTING DESERTIFICATION REQUIRES CONTINUED
VIGILANCE AND ACTION BY GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY TO DEMONSTRATE
WHY SOUND LAND MANAGEMENT IS IN THE BEST NEAR AND LONG TERM
INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY AND THE INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS.

A WORLDWIDE PROBLEM

THE PROBLEM IS CRITICAL ON A WORLDWIDE SCALE. AND THE
LONG-TERM SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF
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PAGE 02 NAIROB 11155 02 OF 03 302330Z

FAILURE TO SOLVE IT ARE ENORMOUS.

THE BACKGROUND ANALYSES AND NUMEROUS. CASE STUDIES BEFORE
THIS CONFERENCE REVEAL THE SAME PATTERN IDENTIFIED IN MY
REVIEW OF THE U.S. DOMESTIC EXPERIENCE BEING REPEATED
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD: THE RELENTLESS PRESSURES OF TOO MANY
PEOPLE AND TOO MANY ANIMALS ON LAND THAT CAN SUPPORT FAR

FEWER NUMBERS...THE INTRODUCTION OF INAPPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAUSE FERTILE SOIL TO BLOW AWAY OR BECOME SALINE...OVERUSE AND MISUSE OF LIMITED WATER RESOURCES, CAUSING THEM TO BECOME DEGRADED OR TO DRY UP...AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE VEGETATIVE COVER BY MISMANAGEMENT, LACK OF UNDERSTANDING, OR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC NECESSITY WHICH, REGARDLESS OF ORIGIN, QUICKLY ALLOWS THE DESERTS TO INTRUDE. SLOWLY BUT INEXORABLY, OVER THE DECADES, GOOD LAND IS LOST TO THE DESERT. WHEN DROUGHT APPEARS, THE DEGRADED CONDITION IS ACCELERATED...AND DRAMATIZED.

COMBATting DESERTIFICATION IS NOT EASY UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES. CONSEQUENTLY, WE RECOGNIZE THAT DESERTIFICATION MUST BE ATTACKED AS PART OF A MUCH LARGER EFFORT--ONE DEDICATED TO UPLIFTING THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND MAN'S ECONOMIC CONDITION THROUGH AN INTENSIFIED GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

THE UNITED STATES IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH THE OTHER NATIONS IN THE WORLD TO ACHIEVE A NEW ECONOMIC SYSTEM. WE STAND SECOND TO NONE IN OUR CONCERN THAT BASIC HUMAN NEEDS ARE MET EVERYWHERE, AND THAT PEOPLE AND THE BETTERMENT OF THEIR CONDITION SHOULD BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF OUR ENDEAVORS AT THIS CONFERENCE AND BEYOND.

I EMPHASIZE THIS BECAUSE THE SUBJECT OF THIS CONFERENCE-- DESERTIFICATION--REQUIRES US TO SPEND MUCH OF OUR TIME
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PAGE 03 NAIROB 11155 02 OF 03 302330Z

DISCUSSING LAND...WATER...AND TECHNOLOGIES...AND POLICIES ...AND LAWS...AND INSTITUTIONS. WHILE DOING THIS WE ARE EVER MINDFUL, HOWEVER, THAT CONCERN FOR THESE INANIMATES DERIVES DIRECTLY FROM OUR BELIEF THAT THE WORLD'S MARGINAL LANDS WILL BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL TO MANKIND'S QUEST FOR A BETTER LIFE ONLY IF WE CAN FOCUS ON THE BASIC CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE A MATTER OF DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE UNITED STATES IF THIS CONFERENCE DIVERTS PRECIOUS TIME TO DEBATING ACCEPTED DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS THAT CANNOT BE ACHIEVED UNTIL THE DESERTS HAVE BEEN ROLLED BACK. TO ASK MORE FROM THESE LANDS AT THE PRESENT IS LIKE EXPECTING A SICK PERSON TO DO A WELL PERSON'S WORK. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE. THE FIRST TASK IS TO GET THE SICK PERSON BACK ON HIS FEET AND BACK TO HIS POTENTIAL.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

UP TO THIS POINT, I HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT CONCERNS... ABOUT COMPLEX PROBLEMS...AND ABOUT DIFFICULT CHALLENGES. I REALLY WANT TO TALK ABOUT HOPE.

AND THERE IS HOPE WHEN THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD AGREE

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A PROBLEM AND MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT
TO COME TOGETHER TO ATTEMPT TO FIND WAYS TO COPE WITH IT.
THE DOCUMENTATION BEFORE THIS CONFERENCE IS ALSO A SOURCE
OF HOPE...AND OF INSPIRATION.

THERE IS HOPE ALSO TO BE FOUND IN THE OPPORTUNITIES
WHICH LIE BEFORE US IN THE WAY OF NEW METHODOLOGIES AND
TECHNOLOGIES WHICH CAN BE APPLIED TO THE TASK. THIS CON-
FERENCE CAN MAKE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION BY RAISING PUBLIC
AWARENESS OF THE STATUS OF THESE NEW TOOLS...AND ALSO OF
THE STEPS WHICH MUST BE TAKEN TO INSURE THIE IMPORVEMENT,
GENERAL AVAILABILITY AND APPROPRIATE APPLICATION. I HAVE
IN MIND, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PROSPECT OF MONITORING AND
ASSESSING THE DESERTIFICATION PROCESS VIA SATELLITE AND
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PAGE 04 NAIROB 11155 02 OF 03 302330Z

GROUND-BASED REMOTE SENSING...AND THE APPLICATION OF NEW
PRINCIPLES OF MULTIPLE-USE RESOURCE PLANNING AND MANAGE-
MENT. THE EXTENSIVE RESEARCH ON ARID LANDS PROBLEMS
WHICH HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT BY NATIONS, INDIVIDUALLY AND
COLLECTIVELY OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES, IS BEGINNING
TO BEAR FRUIT. GREATER USE OF SALINE WATER FOR FOOD
PRODUCTION...THE SAFE USE OF SEWAGE FOR IRRIGATION AND
SOIL AMENDMENT...DESALINATION OF BRACKISH GROUNDWATER
..."NO-TILLAGE" AGRICULTURE...DROUGHT-TOLERANT CROP
VARIETIES...AND ECONOMIC UTILIZATION OF HERETFORE
NEGLECTED DESERT VEGETATION...THESE AND MANY OTHERS OFFER
POTENTIAL NEW WEAPONS IN HUMANITY'S AGE-OLD FIGHT TO UTILIZE
THE DESERTS AND THE DESERT MARGINS IN A MANNER
WHICH HARMONIZES SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPERATIVES WITH
ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS.

HOPE ALSO DERIVES FROM THE HISTORIC WILLINGNESS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO RALLY AT TIMES OF CRISIS. MY
COUNTRY IS PLEASED TO BE AMONG THOSE IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE
MANY DONOR NATIONS WHICH ARE RESPONDING TO THE SAHELIAN DROUGHT.

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 11155 03 OF 03 302339Z
ACTION AF-10

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EB-08 EPA-04 INR-07 L-03 NSF-02 NSAE-00 PM-05
USIA-15 SS-15 SP-02 INT-05 /117 W
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R 301907Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 929
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
USUN NEW YORK 1213

UNCLAS FINAL SECTION 3 OF 3 NAIROBI 11155/3

FROM USDEL

THE SAHEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WHICH IS NOW BEGINNING TO BE IMPLEMENTED UNDER AFRICAN LEADERSHIP HOLDS GREAT PROMISE FOR PROMOTING ECOLOGICALLY-SOUND AND ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SEVERELY IMPACTED REGION OVER BOTH THE MEDIUM AND LONG TERM. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAM TO THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION TO BE ADOPTED BY THIS CONFERENCE IS A MATTER WE BELIEVE SHOULD RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION OVER THE NEXT TWO WEEKS.

IN ADDITION TO PARTICIPATING IN NUMEROUS "SPECIAL" EFFORTS SUCH AS THE SAHEL PROGRAM OVER RECENT DECADES, THE UNITED STATES HAS CONTINUALLY PROVIDED EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCIENTISTS AND STUDENTS FROM ABROAD IN OUR LABORATORIES AND UNIVERSITIES. WORKING UNILATERALLY, BILATERALLY AND THROUGH THE MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS, WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO HELP ADDRESS PROBLEMS OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD THROUGH COOPERATIVE RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION AND CAPITAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. MANY OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE DONE LIKEWISE. HOWEVER, AS THIS CONFERENCE DEMONSTRATES BY ITS MERE EXISTENCE..."WE", IN THE UNITED STATES,... "WE", THE WORLD COMMUNITY OF NATIONS,...HAVE NOT DEALT ADEQUATELY
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PAGE 02 NAIROBI 11155 03 OF 03 302339Z

WITH THE PROBLEM.

THE U.S. COMMITMENT

SPEAKING FOR MY GOVERNMENT...THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED TO DO MORE. I KNOW THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WILL JOINT WITH US AFTER THIS CONFERENCE IN AN INTENSIFIED, COORDINATED ATTACK ON ONE OF THE MOST CRUCIAL GLOBAL PROBLEMS WHICH WE, OUR CHILDREN, AND FUTURE GENERATIONS MUST CONFRONT. LET ME ILLUSTRATE THE INTENT AND THRUST OF THE U.S COMMITMENT IN THIS REGARD WITH SEVERAL EXAMPLES.

THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS IS JUST NOW PUTTING FINAL

TOUCHES ON A FOREIGN ASSISTANCE BILL WHICH WILL PROVIDE A NEW AND SPECIFIC MANDATE FOR THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES, TRAINING AND RESEARCH IN THE AREAS OF NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING. THIS LEGISLATION CALLS FOR SPECIAL EFFORTS "TO MAINTAIN AND RESTORE THE LAND, VEGETATION, WATER, WILDLIFE, AND OTHER RESOURCES UPON WHICH DEPEND ECONOMIC GROWTH AND HUMAN WELL-BEING, ESPECIALLY THAT OF THE POOR."

UNDER THIS SAME AUTHORIZATION, THE UNITED STATES WILL LAUNCH A NEW INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM DEVOTED TO ENERGY ALTERNATIVES FOR ARID AREAS. IT WILL INCLUDE DEMONSTRATION OF SMALL-SCALE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES FOR USE IN RURAL AREAS AS SUBSTITUTES FOR FIREWOOD; A TRAINING COURSE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRY EXPERTS ON ENERGY ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE RURAL SECTOR; AND RESEARCH ON FAST-GROWING TREES FOR USE IN REFORESTATION, LEADING TO DEVELOPMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL PLANTATIONS FOR SUCH TREES.

IN ADDITION, WE WILL SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARID LANDS
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PAGE 03 NAIROB 11155 03 OF 03 302339Z

INFORMATION SYSTEM WHICH WILL PROVIDE ACCESS TO WORLD-WIDE RESEARCH ON ARID ZONE PROBLEMS AND MULTIPLE USE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT. MY GOVERNMENT PLANS TO CONTINUE AND STRENGTHEN ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE SAHEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, AND WILL SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SAHELIAN INSTITUTE. THE UNITED STATES IS ALSO PREPARED TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO ASSISTING WITH THE STRENGTHENING OR ESTABLISHMENT OF OTHER REGIONAL INSTITUTES OR CENTERS JUDGED ESSENTIAL BY THIS CONFERENCE.

I MENTIONED EARLIER THE RICH POTENTIAL AFFORDED BY REMOTE SENSING...AND WISH TO NOTE THAT TWO TRANS-NATIONAL FEASIBILITY STUDIES ON NEW REGIONAL CENTERS IN LATIN AMERICA AND ASIA WILL BE PRESENTED TO THIS FORUM. THE UNITED STATES PLANS TO UPGRADE ITS METEOROLOGICAL SATELLITE SYSTEM, AND TO CONTINUE ITS EXPERIMENTAL LANDSAT PROGRAM. THROUGHOUT THESE EFFORTS WE WILL SUPPORT THE EXPANDED WORLDWIDE USE OF THE DATA AND PROVIDE INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING IN THEIR INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION. IN ADDITION, THE U.S. NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION WILL GIVE EVERY CONSIDERATION TO REQUESTS FOR LANDSAT DATA OUTSIDE THE RANGE OF EXISTING GROUND RECEIVING STATIONS TO SUPPORT SOUND PROJECTS RELATED TO DESERTIFICATION.

AS A FINAL EXAMPLE...AND OUR DELEGATION IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS THESE AND OTHER U.S. INITIATIVES IN MORE DETAIL AS OUR DELIBERATIONS PROCEED...OUR PEACE CORPS IS

PREPARED TO TRAIN AND PLACE, AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REQUEST, UP
TO 1,000 VOLUNTEERS WORLDWIDE TO ASSIST IN REFORESTATION,
NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND RELATED ANTI-DESERTIFICATION
PROGRAM EFFORTS.

LET ME CONCLUDE, MR. PRESIDENT, BY SAYING THAT THE
UNITED STATES IS GRATIFIED THAT THE CURRENT CONCEPT OF UN
CONFERENCES IS NOT SIMPLY DISCUSSION GROUPS BUT ACTION
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PAGE 04 NAIROB 11155 03 OF 03 302339Z

CONFERENCES. IT IS THEREFORE OUR HOPE THAT THIS CONFERENCE
WILL PROCEED IN THE SAME SPIRIT OF HARMONY AND COOPERATION
WHICH MARKED THE RECENTLY-COMPLETED UN WATER
CONFERENCE. THE U.S. IS NOW REVIEWING ITS WATER RESOURCES
PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS, BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL
///AND WE INTEND TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS IN
LIGHT OF THE DELIBERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF MAR DEL PLATA.
MY GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER THE RESULTS OF THIS
CONFERENCE WITH THE SAME INTEREST AND SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE.

THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SOIL EROSION, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 30-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NAIROB11155
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770314-0061
Format: TEL
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977088/aaaaagrt.tel
Line Count: 467
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9767635f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 9
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1657899
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UN CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION: PRINCIPAL US STATEMENT FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE DELIVERED BY US CHIEF OF DELEGATION JAMES A. JOSEPH DU RING MORNING SESSI
TAGS: SENV, OCON, KE, UN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9767635f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009